

Message Text

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15

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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R 290920Z JAN 74

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1309

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T PEKING 0178

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR MARR MOPS RP CH

SUBJ: POSITION WITH RESPECT TO SPRATLEY ISLANDS

REF: MANILA 1038

1. PRC POSTURE FOLLOWING TERMINATION OF HOSTILITIES IN PARACELS INCLUDING: A) PROMPT RETURN OF PRISONERS, INCLUDING KOSH; B) DROP OFF IN CHINESE AIR AND NAVAL OPERATIONS NEAR PARACELS AND NONE IN VICINITY OF SPRATLEYS; C) RAPID FALL-OFF IN PROPAGANDA TREATMENT OF WHOLE AFFAIR, ALL SUGGEST THERE IS GOOD CHANCE CHINESE DO NOT INTEND FURTHER MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SPRATLEYS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN PARACELS UNLESS PHILS OR OTHERS TAKE SOME ACTION WHICH WOULD APPEAR PROVOCATIVE TO PRC. WHILE SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES STILL OBTAIN, WE CAN PERCEIVE OF NO "APPROPRIATE STEPS WITH PEKING" (REFTEL PARA 4) WHICH WOULD HAVE USEFUL EFFECT FROM OUR OR PHIL POINT OF VIEW. DIRECT DEMARCHE WOULD PRODUCE USUAL STERILE PRC REITERATION OF ITS POSITION, AROUSE CHINESE SUSPICIONS, AND WOULD INJECT U.S. DIRECTLY INTO CLOUDED PICTURE OF CONFLICTING CLAIMS TO BOTH PARACELS AND SPRATLEYS. OTHER MOVES SUCH AS DISPLAY OF U.S. NAVAL FORCE IN AREA WOULD BE HIGHLY PROVOCATIVE.

SECRET

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2. CIRCUMSTANCES WITH REGARD TO SPRATLEYS ALSO SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN PARACELS. FOR THE CHINESE TO MOVE AGAINST "REACTIONARY SAIGON AUTHORITIES" IS ONE THING (AND EVEN HERE CHINESE PROPAGANDA HAS APPEARED RATHER

DEFENSIVE), BUT IT WOULD BE QUITE DIFFERENT FOR THEM
TO INITIATE ATTACKS AGAINST FORCES OF A COUNTRY TOWARD WHICH
THEY HAVE BEEN MAKING SOME POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GESTURES.
MOREOVER, DISTANCES BETWEEN SPRATLEYS AND PRC AIR
BASES ON HAINAN AND LIUCHOW PENINSULA MAY BE SUCH AS TO
LIMIT PRC USE OF AIRPOWER (MIG-15S, 17S, 19S AND IL-28S),
IF NOT RULE IT OUT ENTIRELY.
JENKINS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

SECRET

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